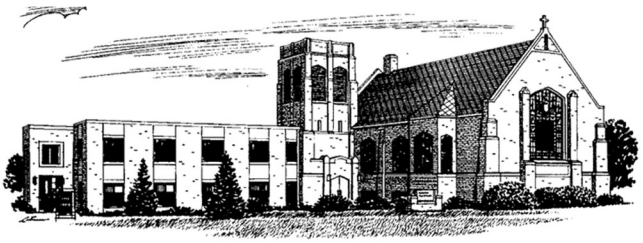
SARON MONTHLY NEWSLETTER

Saron Evangelical Lutheran Church (ELCA)
510 Main Street
St. Joseph, Michigan 49085



Website: www.saronlutheran.org
Email: info@saronlutheran.org
Phone: 269-983-1273
Facebook:www.facebook.com/saronlutheranchurchst.joseph

The Rev. Joan Oleson, Pastor
Home: 269-983-2475
Email: oleson@saronlutheran.org
Patrick Blanchard, Vicar
Cell: 616-460-7150
Email: pblanchard13@live.com
Marcus Roll, Music Director
Email: roll1mc@gmail.com
Irma Gorman, Organist
Amanda Bradley, Admin Assistant
Cell: 419-306-5780
Email: info@saronlutheran.org
Bradley717@gmail.com
Megan Savage, Bookkeeper
Email: financial@saronlutheran.org
Emily Gaul, Child Care

Typical Sunday at Saron:
Fall, Winter and Spring:
8:30am Worship On-Location
11am Worship with Zoom Option
Nursery Available
9:40 Learning Hour for Ages 2-Adult

Summer of 2022 (beginning June 5):
10am Worship
On-Location and via Zoom
Nursery Available
No Learning Hour

We hold in prayer:
The Rev. Elizabeth Eaton,
Presiding Bishop, ELCA
The Rev. Dr. Craig Satterlee, Bishop of the
North/West Lower Michigan Synod, ELCA
The Episcopal Diocese of Western MI

Our Companion Synods:
Christian Lutheran Church of Honduras
Lutheran Church of Papua New Guinea
Lutheran Church of Latvia
Saron's Mission: *Joyfully sharing God's love for all!!*

PASTOR JOAN'S ARTICLE FOR MAY 2022

How will you live Easter joy this season?
Easter Day is done. We've sung our initial Alleluias! The Easter flowers are beginning to fade. Yet we are still early in the six-weeks of the Easter season, the 50 days that take us to the celebration of Pentecost. How will we live the Easter joy?

Tish Harrison Warren, a priest in the Anglican Church in North America, wrote this about Easter joy in her Easter day newsletter column for the New York Times:
For Christians, joy has deep roots. It springs from the hope that Jesus is risen and is making all things new. Easter is a season of joy not because we insist that the glass is half-full but because Jesus himself, the Bible says in Ephesians, "fills everything in every way." This means that death is real, but there's something greater than death. Injustice is real, but it's not the end of the story. Heartbreak is real but it gives way to redemption. Suffering is real, but it cannot erase beauty.

For some, Easter joy comes easily; for others, not so much. However it is for you, I pray that Easter joy is yours, even when we feel surrounded by so much joylessness. I pray that you/we can live in the beauty that surrounds us. I pray that you/we can hear the words of forgiveness that Christ gives, join at Christ's table and be fed, and both receive and share God's abundant love and to all. The joy of Easter abounds. I pray we see it, hear it, experience it, shout about it, sing it and live it - out of the hope that is ours because Christ is risen. He is risen indeed. Alleluia!

-Pastor Joan

General Information

COVID-19 PRECAUTIONS

Always watch weekly emails and door signage for the current protocols. As of printing, we are encouraging masks but are no longer requiring them. Nursery workers and communion assistants will wear masks.

OFFICE HOURS

Pastor Joan and/or Vicar Patrick
Monday-Thursday Mornings
Amanda Bradley (Admin Assistant):
Mondays & Thursdays 8am-noon
Wednesdays as needed
Helping Hands Office Volunteers:
Wednesdays 9:15am-11am (approx)
Megan Savage (Bookkeeper):
Tuesdays & Thursdays 5:30pm

When Pastor is out of town, emergency pastoral care information can be obtained by calling the church office (269/983-1273) or contacting the council president.

Note: Emails for Pastor should be addressed to oleson@saronlutheran.org to ensure privacy. Emails to Amanda and the church office should be sent to info@saronlutheran.org.

Caring and Sharing

IN OUR PRAYERS

Richard Schalon is at the Whitcomb Tower Retirement Center in St. Joseph; **Bernice Koski** is at Woodland Terrace in Bridgman; **Kathleen Preston** is at Woodland Terrace in St. Joseph.

Happy May Birthday Wishes to Saron's Members!

5/2 John Hoodlebrink
5/3 Brooklyn Huff
5/4 Andrew Fortenbacher
5/6 Charlene Baumgartner
5/9 Dennis Lundgren
5/11 Kelli Christman
5/12 Alexander Maly
5/12 Andrew Stankiewicz
5/13 Jenna Henderson
5/15 Kathie Bradley
5/19 Monica Freemire
5/19 Nora Lewis
5/22 Connor Ashley
5/22 Laura Chaddock
5/23 Adam Bradley
5/24 Elliot Hooper
5/25 Matthew Bradley
5/28 Marlene Cox
5/30 Benjamin Frey
5/31 David Bradley

Happy May Anniversary Wishes to Saron's Members!

5/2 Kathleen & Phillip Preston
5/9 Marilyn & Dale Lucy
5/15 David & Elizabeth Lundgren
5/16 Ann & Ted Dosch
5/20 Charles & Catherine Hoch
5/21 K.T. Alexander & Katie Kroening
5/22 James & Laura Hicks
5/23 Mary Alice & Edward Brunner
5/23 Ryan & Serena Talbert
5/25 Matthew & Amanda Bradley
5/30 Bob & Mary Kynast

"God's Blessings for a very happy day and year round!"

If there are any omissions from the birthday or anniversary list, or if a date is incorrect, please let us know so we can get it correct in the future!

IN SYMPATHY

We offer our heartfelt condolences to the families of Fritz Knauf and his sisters, Mary Jane Wolf, Elaine Schueneman, Mitzi Tompkins and Marlene Johnson, upon the death of their mother,

Lyra Jane Krall

on Sunday, April 17, 2022.

God is our refuge and strength.
- Psalm 46:1a

CONGRATULATIONS

We are proud to celebrate the achievements of Dr. Dan Fortenbacher as he received the G.N. Getman Award, the highest award given in Developmental Optometry. This demonstrates his clinical expertise and application in the field of developmentally-oriented optometry with an awe-inspiring personal and professional concern for all patients, especially children.

FIRST COMMUNION

We welcome Elijah Nicholas to the Lord's table on May 1 as he partakes his first communion. Congratulations, Elijah!

A NOTE FROM THE VICAR

Many of you know that I grew up in the South. One of the "Southernisms" that I heard over and over again in church was about prayer. When people would pray for someone or something, more often than not the pastor would say – "Now you need to put some feet on those prayers!" I later came to understand that it's great to pray for people and their needs but it's even better when you can make those prayers tangible.

You have walked a long way with your prayers for my successful surgery and recovery. I have felt the many prayers and concerns that you've sent my way. Although I was not with you physically, the awareness that you were praying created a very strong spiritual bond. Whenever I received a card in the mail or an email asking me how I was doing, it lifted my spirits and helped stimulate healing. Thank God that I am on the mend and that everything turned out all right.

I am extremely grateful to be part of such a caring, prayer-centered congregation. I have always been on the giving end. It has been an adjustment to be on the receiving end but one that has taught me many lessons about effectively caring for others. Prayer is powerful. Whenever I think of it, I remember Paul's words to the Thessalonians. "*Rejoice always, pray without ceasing, in everything give thanks, for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you*." 1 Thess. 5:16-18

Please let me know how I can remember you in my prayers.

-Vicar Patrick

FORTIFY & fly

It's only been a few weeks and it already feels like the new sanctuary seating was always meant to be there. We will continue to tweak the orientation until it's just right but I think we've all been enjoying the "*you may be seated*" parts of the service just a little more than we used to.

We sincerely appreciate the many volunteers that unloaded and arranged the new seating. It was a massive undertaking made possible only by the many bodies that arrived, ready and willing to work. The delivery company was impressed at how quick and efficient we were! (See pictures on the last page) Also, big thank you again to Ed Staude for the time and effort it took to organize the reserving and removal of the old pews. It went super smoothly and took a heavy load off our minds.

Speaking of the old pews, we have some items available that may be of interest. These crosses were made, some entirely and some partially, of the old pews. They will be set up in the narthex beginning May 1 and until they are gone. All donations will be put into the Fortify & Fly fund. Thank you to Bob Deaton for creating these beautiful keepsakes!

At the end of March 2022, we had collected an additional $170 for a total of $374,767 towards our pledge total of $367,205. If you have a pledge to fulfill or simply wish to continue giving, we're happy to accept it. As always, thank you for your support!

Worship

Are you interested in becoming a member of Saron or learning more about the faith from the Lutheran perspective? If so, contact Pastor Joan. New members will be received on May 15 and 29.

SUMMER WORHSIP SCHEDULE

Sunday, May 29, will begin our summer worship schedule. We will combine into one worship time at **10am with a Zoom option**. There will be no Learning Hour during the summer months, returning after Labor Day.

NURSERY

Nursery service is available during both services. In order to utilize the space most effectively, this option is primarily directed towards our youngest members and guests. For pre-schoolers that occasionally need more physical and/or emotional space, activities are available in the narthex. There are also clipboards with coloring pages, as well as children's bulletins, to assist kids as they transition into participating in worship. **It's vital to embrace having family units in all stages in our congregation and as such, we gladly welcome wiggles and giggles in worship!**

The goal of the nursery is to provide a safe environment to facilitate a meaningful worship experience for families negotiating life with children. We recognize that may not look the same for all and encourage concerns and suggestions.

For health and safety reasons, only the approved childcare providers assigned for that day should be in the nursery space during worship. Nursing mothers are always welcome!

PRAYER GROUP

Join us Mondays at 11am for a time of quiet reflection and prayer, which includes lifting up the requests offered on Sundays at worship or via other means. We meet in the sanctuary.

ZOOM COFFEE HOUR

We will continue the Zoom fellowship at 11am as long as there is interest. The link remains the same each week and is at the bottom of the email sent on Thursdays.

ALTAR FLOWERS

You can sponsor a week by using the link in the weekly email or by calling the church office. Make sure to note any special occasion to be recognized in the bulletin. Flowers are $35 per vase. Please follow up with a check to Saron with "Flowers" on the memo line. Thank you for helping to beautify our worship services! Feel free to take them home after the last service to enjoy. **Please return the vase to Saron to be reused.**

FACEBOOK

We often share pictures of Saron's ministry on our Facebook page and we get great feedback. It is our practice not to put names with the pictures. If you have questions, or prefer your picture not to appear, please contact Pastor.

SUNDAY SCRIPTURE READINGS

As you prepare for worship, you are invited to read and reflect on the Scriptures for the day.

May 1: Third Sunday of Easter
Acts 9:1-6
Psalm 30 (11)
Revelation 5:11-14
John 21:1-19

May 8: Fourth Sunday of Easter
Acts 9:36-43
Psalm 23 (1)
Revelation 7:9-17
John 10:22-30

May 15: Fifth Sunday of Easter
Acts 11:1-18
Psalm 148 (13)
Revelation 21:1-6
John 13:31-35

May 22: Sixth Sunday of Easter
Acts 16:9-15
Psalm 67 (4)
Revelation 21:10, 22 - 22:5
John 14:23-29

May 29: Seventh Sunday of Easter
Acts 16:16-34
Psalm 97 (12)
Revelation 22:12-14, 16-17, 20-21
John 17:20-26

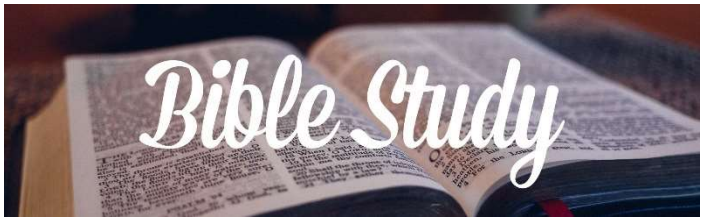
YOUTH GROUP

Our youth group (grades 6-12) plans to gather on **Sunday, May 15, from 12:30pm-2:30pm at the church**. Mark your calendars for summer meetings being planned for the evenings of **June 22 and July 20** with location to be announced. Also, we are planning a community-based service project this summer. Stay tuned for further details. We look forward to seeing you. Friends are always welcome!

Contact Merrily at merrilyannsmith@gmail.com with any questions.

Learning

Saron is a congregation seeking to become more fluent in the first language of faith, the language of Scripture, in order that we might live into our calling as a people renewed, enlivened, empowered and sent by the Word.



SUNDAY LEARNING HOUR

We offer a time of age-appropriate Bible studies between the two services, from **9:40-10:30:**

- **Grades 5 and Under** meet in the Sunday school classroom.
- **Confirmation Students** (Grades 6-8) meet in the confirmation classroom.
- **Adult Forum** meets in the upstairs lounge.

We look forward to seeing everyone!

TUESDAY EVENING BIBLE STUDY

After Easter, we began a study of "Difficult Words of Jesus," by Amy Jill Levine. Note: the Thursday morning Bible study group is using the same text so you may have access to a copy through a Thursday participant. If you need a book, it can be ordered from Amazon : ***The Difficult Words of Jesus, A Beginner's Guide to His Most Perplexing Teachings*** **by Prof. Amy-Jill Levine (paperback $13.49 or Kindle $9.99).**

Vicar Patrick is planning to be our leader for much of the study. **We meet on-location in the upstairs lounge at 6pm.** Following an hour or so of study and discussion, those who want can adjourn to Azul Tequila for something to eat and more conversation. **All are welcome for one session or many!**

"Iron Sharpens Iron and One Person Sharpens the Wits of Another"

If you have any questions about this group, feel free to call, text, or email:
Bob Kynast (269-921-2786, bobkynast@gmail.com)
Don Hafer (269-985-3637, hafer.don@gmail.com)

THURSDAY MORNING BIBLE STUDY

Join us through May for a study entitled "The Difficult Words of Jesus." The class meets in the lounge from 9:30-11am and simultaneously on Zoom. Cost of the study guide is $13. Contact Pastor for more details or to reserve a book.

From the website - *Jesus provided his disciples teachings for how to follow Torah, God's word; he told them parables to help them discern questions of ethics and of human nature; he offered them beatitudes for comfort and encouragement. But sometimes Jesus spoke words that followers then and now have found difficult. He instructs disciples to hate members of their own families (Luke 14:26), to act as if they were slaves (Matthew 20:27), and to sell their belongings and give to the poor (Luke 18:22). He restricts his mission (Matthew 10:6); he speaks of damnation (Matthew 8:12); he calls Jews the devil's children (John 8:44).*

In The Difficult Words of Jesus, Amy-Jill Levine shows how these difficult teachings would have sounded to the people who first heard them, how have they been understood over time, and how we might interpret them in the context of the Gospel of love and reconciliation.

Please let Pastor know if you ever have any questions or need the Zoom link. **This class is open to all interested in attending.** You are welcome to join any time, for one session or for many.

Come join us May 1 at 6:30pm on-location in the upstairs lounge to wrap-up our 2021/2022 season. Masks are optional. We plan to also have a Zoom component for those who wish. The topic for discussion is "The Midnight Library" by Matt Haig. According to Haig, between life and death there is a library. The books in the Midnight Library enable one to live as if one had done things differently. Curious? Author Jodi Picoult says: "A beautiful fable. Another 'It's a Beautiful Life' (movie) for the modern age. Impossibly timely when we are all stuck in a world we wish could be different."

To make sure you're on our email list to receive reminders and updates, please contact Kathy Cowall (269)428-0354 or kcowall@hotmail.com. If you love to read, talk and share ideas, come be a part of this group. All are welcome whenever we meet.

"Show me a family of readers, and I will show you the people who move the world." (Napoleon Bonaparte)

MEN'S MONTHLY DEVOTION

We will not have the Saturday monthly devotion/breakfast in May, June, or July. Hopefully, we'll start up again in August or September.

Contact Dennis Lundgren with any questions at dennis.lundgren@me.com

Women of the ELCA

DEBORAH CIRCLE

As of this writing, Deborah Circle we will meet at 7pm on Wednesday, May 11, on-location in the church lounge with a Zoom option for those who wish. If things change drastically, we may meet by Zoom only. Denise Cook will be our study leader. The lesson will be from the January/February 2022 issue of Gather magazine, entitled "The Kingdom of God: Mysteries of the Kingdom, Session Two: parables, banquets and children," page 30.

Contact Melanie McCammon at 269/449-8399 for more information about this group.

Hospitality

SUNDAY SNACKS

Who doesn't love a snack during a time of fellowship in the narthex after the service? If you would like to be a Sunday snack host, sign up via the link in our weekly email or call/email the office so Amanda can sign you up. Please plan for 30 to partake. Thank you!

Outreach

NOISY OFFERING

We receive a noisy offering (or those not-so-noisy bills) on the first Sunday of each month. These gifts are sent to ELCA World Hunger. Thank you for your generous offerings!

BENTON HARBOR SOUP KITCHEN

Simple food, honestly sourced and lovingly made creates connections, gives fuel to the fight, and starves ignorance and apathy. – Benton Harbor Soup Kitchen

On March 24, Saron members Jim Manore, Pastor Joan, Merrily Smith & Mary Alice Brunner were busy at the Benton Harbor Soup Kitchen preparing and packing 115 sack lunches. The lunches included cookies provided by members of Saron.

If you feel comfortable helping to prepare a sack lunch at the Soup Kitchen or providing cookies, please use the link in the weekly email to sign up or contact Kathie Bradley at 269/921-4665.

Thank you to all who continue to support this ministry with your time, contributions, and prayers: *Joyfully sharing God's love for all!*

INCLUSIVITY TASK FORCE

The Inclusivity Task Force is committed to extending a welcome to all. Our congregation adopted the following welcome statement and is a **Reconciling in Christ** church.

As a community of faith who *joyfully shares God's love for all*, we believe our lives and faith are strengthened by diversity. We strive to be a community who welcomes people of every ability, age, citizenship status, ethnicity, gender identity and expression, language, marital status, political perspective, race, and sexual orientation. We are committed to the work of racial equity. Whatever life's circumstance, we openly welcome and value you. We celebrate God's unconditional love and respond joyfully to your presence here. All are welcome. You are welcome.

Bias & Its Impact on Welcome

ReconcilingWorks
LUTHERANS FOR FULL PARTICIPATION

How does bias impact our welcome?

Join us for a training entitled
"Bias & Its Impact on Welcome."

How is it that bias impacts welcome, creativity, and innovation for our lives and ministries? The reality is that bias is part of our lives and we must address it. **Saron is hosting a training session entitled "Bias & Its Impact on Welcome" with two opportunities to participate.** We encourage your attendance as we discuss the ways bias deeply impacts the ways we are in relationship with one another as people of faith. There is no cost to attend.

Join us **Sunday, May 15 at 4pm OR Sunday, May 22 at 6:30pm**. Watch for more details. While we prefer on-location attendance, there will be a Zoom option available. The training comes out of Reconciling Works and will be facilitated by Laura Hicks.

If you ever have any questions or need clarification on our inclusivity journey, please feel free to call any one of the task force members:
Connor Ashley: cashley1837@outlook.com
Laurel Gacek: 269/470-6062 or mlmg2445@sbcglobal.net
Laura Hicks: 517/930-0579 or lhicks42@gmail.com
Darlene Kiessel: 269/313-4062 or kiessel@me.com
Diane Madej (Open Hearts. Open Church): 231/670-0328 or dianemadej234@gmail.com
Pr Joan Oleson: 269/983-1273 or oleson@saronlutheran.org

INTERFAITH ACTION

Interfaith Action

Interfaith Action (swmichiganinterfaith.org) is a coalition of over 40 faith communities in Allegan, Berrien, Cass, St. Joseph, and Van Buren Counties. Some members of Saron attend meetings and work with various task force groups. One of the goals of Interfaith Action is to promote understanding and respect for diversity.

Check out the Interfaith news bulletins at swmichinterfaith.org/bulletins

Support

The Support Committee will be meeting on the second Tuesday of each month at 8pm. Meetings will continue to be held on Zoom. Contact Don Hafer with any questions at 269/985-3637.

STOCK DONATIONS

Saron partners with TD Ameritrade, a brokerage firm, to accept stock donations. If you would like to donate stock, email Joe Ulrey at josephulrey@yahoo.com to receive more information. Thanks!

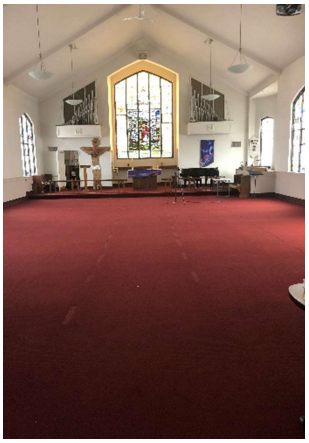
Facilities

OUTDOOR SPRING CLEANUP

Now that Spring has sprung, we are planning an outdoor cleanup on May 7 at 9am. Let Brad know if you can make it by emailing bradford.frey@yahoo.com. We'll be able to enjoy fellowship treats in the courtyard before we know it!

HELPING HANDS (Previously Golden Hammers)

We do all sorts of things from building maintenance to preps for worship in the sanctuary to assembling bulletins and newsletters and so much more. We meet on Wednesdays around 9am and know you are invited – whatever your age, gender, or ability. There is a job for you to use your helping hands.



Many Hands, Light Work

Easter takes an army of volunteers. Thank you to the many scripture orators, prayer readers, communion assistants, flower sponsors, theme decorators, candle lighters, banner carriers, choir singers, bell ringers, cross bearers, people usherers, bulletin folders, music makers, snack bringers, egg hiders, between service cleaners, childcare providers, and craft facilitators. It was a picture perfect day, full of bright smiles and loud alleluias!

SARON LUTHERAN CHURCH
510 MAIN STREET
ST. JOSEPH, MI 49085

Website: www.saronlutheran.org
Email:info@saronlutheran.org

A Congregation of:
The North/West Lower Michigan Synod
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

MAY 2022 NEWSLETTER

Easter Vigil 2022

MAY 2022

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
1 8:30am Worship 9:40am Learning 11am Worship with Zoom Option	**2** 11am Prayer Group	**3**	**4** 9am Helping Hands 11am Zoom Coffee	**5** 9:30am Bible Study 6pm Bells Rehearse 7pm Choir Rehearse	**6**	7
8 8:30am Worship 9:40am Learning 11am Worship with Zoom Option	**9** 11am Prayer Group	**10** 6pm Bible Study 8pm Support Meeting	**11** 9am Helping Hands 11am Zoom Coffee	**12** 9:30am Bible Study 6pm Bells Rehearse 7pm Choir Rehearse	**13**	14 1pm Blossomtime Parade – Building Open (No Food Provided)
15 8:30am Worship 9:40am Learning 11am Worship with Zoom Option **4pm Bias Training**	**16** 11am Prayer Group 7pm Council Meeting	**17** 6pm Bible Study	**18** 9am Helping Hands 11am Zoom Coffee	**19** 9:30am Bible Study 6pm Bells Rehearse 7pm Choir Rehearse **NEWSLETTER ARTICLES DUE**	**20**	21
22 8:30am Worship 9:40am Learning 11am Worship with Zoom Option **6:30pm Bias Training**	**23** 11am Prayer Group	**24** 6pm Bible Study	**25** 9am Helping Hands 11am Zoom Coffee	**26** 9:30am Bible Study 6pm Bells Rehearse 7pm Choir Rehearse **Benton Harbor Soup Kitchen Day**	**27**	28
29 10am Worship with Zoom Option No Learning Hour for the Summer	**30** MEMORIAL DAY	**31** 6pm Bible Study				